

Hello, my name is Erica Sommerer and I live in Ridgefield, CT. I fully support House Bill 6517, An Act Implementing the Recommendations of the Task Force to Analyze the Implementation of Laws Governing Dyslexia Instruction and Training.

I can look back now at my son's experiences in pre-school and see all the red flags that pointed straight to dyslexia. It would take until the end of his first grade year and my persistence to get that official diagnosis listed on his IEP. Our family has a history of dyslexia and it was no surprise to learn that dyslexia affects 1 in 5 people. My son was a late talker, had difficulty with learning nursery rhymes, always got his left and right feet confused, never enjoyed singing along at pre-school, and took time to learn the alphabet and numbers. He began speech services at three and a half years old and was instructed by more than five different teachers over the course of two years. That is how often the Speech-Language Pathologist position changed over in our district.

As school academics became increasingly more challenging for him, special education services were added to his plan, but they were given by teachers who were trained, not certified in OG or Wilson. I also found that many classroom teachers seemed to lack knowledge on what dyslexia specifically is and how to instruct these types of students. It has been heartbreaking to watch my son suffer in school and feel lost in a class of over twenty students. Our state can do better. Give our students the correct structured literacy program they deserve, that will boost their self esteem and give their confidence back.

With this bill I believe teachers would be able to connect more to their students and close those learning gaps. We need our teachers to be educated, certified, and held accountable so that our dyslexic learners can succeed not only in school but in life.

Thank you,
Erica Sommerer